ALTERNATIVE A

Design Focus

The balance between the strong simplicity of the wall and the softening of the edges with landscaping is essential to the effectiveness of this alternative. Coordinating the green spaces outside the right-of-way with the roadway itself greatly increases the impact of the scheme. This concept relies upon maximizing the amount of space for landscaping.

Built Elements: Retaining Walls

The strong block pattern of the retaining walls (A*) defines this scheme in a simple, understated fashion. The leading column of the bridge (B*) is delineated heavily at the base and sculptured vertically, capturing the edge of the bridge. The framework is topped by an angled cap (C*) that creates interesting shadows on the walls. The rail of the bridge (D*) allows views to the highway below. The beam and column framework is expressed in pilasters along the wall, which create a distinct rhythm along the highway and provide support for signage and lighting.

Built Elements: Noise Abatement Walls

The noise abatement wall along the frontage road mimics the pattern of the retaining wall, appearing as a backdrop to the highway. The scale of the noise abatement wall is altered by introducing landscape elements along the side facing the frontage road. The scale can be further reduced to relate to pedestrians by adding planter boxes where appropriate.

Built Elements: Bridges and Overpasses

The cross-street bridge over the highway differs slightly from the highway overpass spanning the cross street. The cross street often does not require the safety barrier in the median, allowing the delineation of the lead column to reach the ground. The severity of the abutment wall at the frontage road can be softened with planter boxes when space is available.

*See Illustrations on Page 37

Built Elements: Special Conditions

Special conditions will occur throughout the corridor, creating tunnels, portals, cantilevers, and cut-and-cover box sections. When these conditions arise, the strong block pattern of the retaining wall would not continue on the tunnel walls, but would be articulated in the cut-and-cover box sections. The column side of the cut-and-cover box section would resemble the pilaster of the highway wall, with equal delineation on both halves of the column. The vertical lines of the pilaster would project onto the cantilevered section of the frontage road.

Lighting / Graphics

The lighting and graphics in this alternative strictly adhere to standards already employed by the state, emphasizing the concept that this highway is affiliated with the remainder of Texas. Also, mounting street names in bold letters directly on the bridges gives continuity to the neighboring highways, while presenting driver information simply and concisely. Other driver information and light poles are mounted on the vertical pilasters of the retaining wall and along the median.

Streetscape Elements: Hardscape

Simple forms of equal strength complement the design of the corridor walls. Bollards placed to create pedestrian zones, and planters on bridges--with landscaping visible from the highway below--can help alter the scale of the cross street. Special paving patterns emphasizing continuity between the streets and the highway are used in accordance with the thoroughfare plans for each city.

Streetscape Elements: Landscape

A split median barrier provides planting space, interrupted only by the columns of the intersecting bridges. At the highway's edge, wherever there is space available, the retaining wall is terraced to accommodate planting along the highway, returning the maximum amount of vegetation to the edge of the proposed corridor. Along the frontage roads, landscaping is introduced to create a clear, but soft edge to the entire project.